

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno's City of Springfield COVID-19 Situational Update

Friday, May 29, 2020

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, in the best interests of our residents and business community, continues his daily morning meetings with his cabinet heads as they work 24/7 to facilitate and coordinate with all of our local, state, federal, and public and private partners in response to the COVID-19 situation.

Below are the most recent updates as reported from each City Departments.

Mayor's Office

- Continues to coordinate the city's efforts with all stakeholders (state, federal, hospital and medical facilities, public and private partners, etc.) in response of services and relief and recovery measures
- Continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely so that as the city begins with phased reopening aspects, the city does not ease prudent measures too early, which could potentially expose our residents to a second wave of the virus
- Continues to stress the need for additional target testing in order to build strong public, business, consumer, and hospital confidences to identify, isolate, contact trace, mitigate and heal potential hot spot areas
- City Hall and all municipal buildings have reopened, by appointment only and with additional restrictions, as part of the city's Phase I reopening plans
 - Temperature checks and face coverings needed to enter city buildings
 - Continuing to encourage residents and businesses to conduct city related business by phone or through the city's website
- Continues to coordinate with cabinet and department heads on reopening aspects of all municipal buildings
- City Hall utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Need for additional thermal infrared thermometers to assist with reopening aspects
- Heartfelt thank you to our Springfield Community for stepping up with PPE donations, allowing the city to outfit our dedicated police, fire and frontline workers with the appropriate safety equipment
- Mayor Sarno requested a moment of pause and reflection on Monday, June 1, 2020 at 4:38 p.m., marking the moment the tornado touched down in the City of Springfield. He also requested that all of our religious organizations, which have the capacity, to chime their bells on Monday, June 1, 2020 at 4:38 p.m.

- Mayor Sarno joined with Congressman Richard E. Neal and PVTA Administrator Sandra Sheehan to announce \$36 million in federal CARES Act Funding for the PVTA
- Mayor Sarno submitted letter to the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission in advance of their public hearing for their proposed FY21 budget, which originally included a 16.9% rate increase. The Commission has since issued a revision to their proposed budget indicating the rate increase could be lower than originally proposed. The Commission also voted to increase the discount for seniors and disabled veterans from \$33 to \$75 per year. The public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, June 2, 2020
- Mayor Sarno to attend weekend mass at his beloved Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Places of worship are permitted to reopen, with restrictions, and hold services as part of the Commonwealth's Phase I reopening plan
- Governor Baker announced he plans to issue an executive order on Monday, June 1 detailing additional industries and sectors for the Phase II reopening plans. No date for the beginning of Phase II has been announced
 - Restaurants and Hotels/Lodging have been identified
 - Guidance for outdoor and indoor dining will be issued
 - Pro sports teams will be allowed to practice

Health

- Announced 19 new cases of Springfield residents testing positive for COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
- Total positive cases now at 2,323
 - City starting to see a leveling of cases, but as more target testing becomes available these numbers will most likely continue to increase - we must remain vigilant
 - 95 deaths of Springfield residents related to COVID-19
 - State has reclassified the 'causes of death' for prior deaths which may not have been attributed to COVID-19 related conditions and underlying health symptoms
 - 49 deaths reported from long term care facilities
 - 46 residential deaths
 - Ethnic breakdown of deaths:
 - 49 White – 51.6%
 - 19 Black – 20%
 - 26 Hispanic – 27.4%
 - 1 Asian – <1%
 - Average age of positives cases – 53 years old
 - Average age of hospitalizations – 68 years old
 - Average age of deaths – 82
 - 98.5% of deaths had underlining health conditions
- Continues to monitor potential COVID-19 cluster locations across the city, especially at our long-term care facilities.
 - National Guard Med Tech through state Department of Public Health and City Health Department continue to provide assistance with our long-term care facilities with testing aspects
- Continues to monitor stores and locations adhering to Governor's public health order for face coverings. Commissioner Caulton-Harris has also personally visited a number of stores and locations
- Commissioner Caulton-Harris through the City of Springfield Board of Health issued Regulation on Face Coverings
 - Mandating face coverings for all persons (with exceptions) to wear a face covering while out in public and where social distancing is not possible

- Requirements for businesses to adhere to the regulation
- Law enforcement and public health officials will enforce regulation
 - City will focus on educational component for the first week to educate and remind residents and businesses of the Governors Order and city regulation
 - Issuing of civil fines will be last resort for those who continue to refuse to comply
- Mayor Sarno and HHS Commissioner Caulton-Harris continue to push and work with the state, local hospitals and healthcare facilities with community health outreach aspects to do much more symptomatic and asymptomatic testing, not only for homeless population, but for all targets
- Continuing with contact tracing
 - Over 1,100 contact tracing has been done so far
- Reviewing plans to expand city contact tracing abilities through Governor Baker's continued initiative efforts
- Announced the continued need and importance of adhering to all public health, personal hygiene and social distancing procedures. Still very important, even though hospitalization numbers are stable, public health is population based and community spread of the virus is still prevalent
- Homeless Triage facilities and operations up and running – results showing tactical strategy is working
 - Total population tested - 187 individuals
 - 9 positives / 4.8%
 - Partnership with Baystate Health for testing at city's Homeless Triage Facility
 - Partnership with Mercy Medical for testing at the Salvation Army and Springfield Rescue Mission – Taylor Street and Mill Street site
 - Developing a transition plan for triage facility
- City of Springfield team collaborated with Mercy Hospital to test City of Northampton and the Town of Amherst homeless population in the western region – 172 individuals tested
- Continuing to review city's phased reopening plan
 - Senior centers will remain closed during Phase I but will continue to provide outreach and wellness checks
- Continues to review complaints during the phase I reopening of those not following proper health and safety measures for reopening, as described in the Governor's Phased Reopening Plan
- City of Springfield COVID-19 hotline - (413) 750-3250 – staffed 7 days a week. 8:30am – 7pm.

Elder Affairs

- Continues to do wellness checks on a daily basis with people in senior housing complexes and associated with senior centers.
- Continues to deliver meals to seniors in need, including over the weekend.
- Senior Centers will remain closed during Phase I reopening
 - Will continue to provide meals, outreach and wellness checks
 - 8,148 meals have so far been delivered to seniors in need

DPW

- 2 down
- Trash and recycling continue to be picked up
- Streets and Engineering continue to provide services
- Yard waste collection continues – possible collection into the weekend
- Household Hazard waste Collection schedule for Saturday, June 6, 2020 with vender

- Call City's 311 Call Center for an appointment @ 736-3111
- Construction projects continue to pick up
 - Street line painting
 - Street paving
 - Milling work
 - Pot holes
 - Sidewalks
- Weekly Construction projects for the week of June 1, 2020
 - Kazbeck Street – utility work
 - Welland Road – utility work
 - Mill Street – utility work, paving tentative for June 8, 2020
 - Union Street – utility work, paving tentative for June 8, 2020
- Virtual meetings of Board of Public Works and Traffic Commission to be held – TBA
- Continues to assist at Central High School Oasis Foodbank aspects

Eco Dev

- Continues to review and secure additional funding for restaurant and small business assistance grants.
 - Between First and Second Round of the “Prime the Pump” grant program, city has now awarded over \$725,000 in grants to Springfield businesses
 - 45% of grants from the “Prime the Pump” were to minority businesses
 - 58% of the first round of ‘Prime the Pump’ grants for restaurants were awarded and contracted to minority and women owned businesses
 - 21% minority owned
 - 8% women owned
 - 29% minority-women owned
 - Reviewing potential plans for a Third Round of funding based on federal relief and recovery efforts which would include assisting small businesses and restaurants in reopening post-COVID-19
 - Reviewing plans for a potential Small Business Reopening Program for Phase II
- Continues to review and identify Federal stimulus funding to focus on local efforts for relief and recovery for our residents and small businesses
- Continues to work with HUD for spending of CDBG funds through the C.A.R.E. Act
- Continues to review costs associated with COVID-19 response for relief and recovery reimbursements.
- Tracking local, state and national unemployment trends and numbers
 - 4.4% unemployment rate in March 2020 for the City of Springfield
 - 20.3% unemployment rate in April 2020
 - Current unemployment rate as of May 16, 2020 by zip code
 - 01104 28%
 - 01107 29.9%
 - 01103 32.7%
 - 01105 33.8%
 - 01108 26.8%
 - 01109 28.8%
 - 01119 26.2%
 - 01118 21.8%
 - 01151 29.9%
 - 01128 22.4%
 - 01129 22.9%
 - 15.1% for the state

- 14.7% for the nation
- Reviewing business and restaurant assistance for the city's phased reopening plan, including but not limited to the closing off of certain streets
- Continues to review and work on economic development projects across the city.
- Reviewing plans for partnering with a local nonprofit provider to assistance with mortgage and rent relief aspects - \$2 million funding potentially available from HUD
- Reviewing and seeking clarification with HUD that jobs created or retained by an assisted business can be presumed to be Low Moderate Income if the job and the business are located in an area that meets certain criteria such as:
 - Has a 20% poverty rate (30% for CBD) and the area evidences pervasive poverty and general distress

Planning Board

- Scheduled virtual public hearing for June 3, 2020
 - Liquor license, zone change and site plan review for various establishments on agenda

Finance

- Provided an update to Mayor and cabinet heads on the projected revenue shortfalls by the federal, state and municipal levels. Reviewed the expected budgetary constraints for the city's FY 20 and FY21 budgets
 - Potentially looking at up to a 28% cut in state local aid or roughly \$11.3 million
 - CAFO TJ Plante joined a conference call with the city's Municipal Bond rating companies to discuss the industries future plans on understanding and reviewing municipal bond ratings across the Commonwealth and the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Continues to explore all public and private means in which to secure additional PPE's for our Police and Fire Departments and our first responders and frontline personnel
- Continues to monitor all federal and state relief and recovery funding and reimbursement mechanisms
 - Springfield eligible for \$13.6 million from the state as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Recovery Security (CARES) Act's Coronavirus Relief Fund for states and municipalities
- Continues to review costs associated with COVID-19 response for relief and recovery reimbursements.
- Implementing strategic spending measures to identify areas of need, relief and recovery while also trying to maintain city services for residents and business community.
- Continuing to review and monitor with the Assessor's Department how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect local real estate sales as recorded with the Hampden County Registry of Deeds and the city's own local assessments of real estate.
 - Real estate sales for residential and commercial properties could potentially be affected due to the coronavirus outbreak, which would in turn, could have potentially negative results for the city's local assessment of property values potentially as soon as the FY21 budget
- Continues to monitor lost revenue – city and state
 - \$3.5 million in lost revenue – city
 - \$5.5 million in deficit spending – city

- Working on and reviewing austerity budget – potentially purposing a three-month budget until state aid from the state FY21 budget becomes clear. Shortfall in state budget revenue is estimated to be around \$4 to \$6 billion.
 - Continuing to monitor all deficit spending to keep essential services going for residents and business community’s immediate needs
- Continues proactive meetings with Josh Norman of GP Strategies to track, identify, and implement relief and recovery reimbursement aspects.
- Continuing to review and monitor all city capital projects to keep them on track to the best of our ability and to extend deadlines if needed
 - 31 Elm / Court Square Project
 - Civic Center Parking Garage
 - Police HQ
 - Pynchon Plaza

Libraries

- Will reopen for curbside pickup only, by appointment starting June 8, 2020
- Beginning printing of PPE masks on 3D printers
- Continuing to answer reference questions by phone and email
- Continuing to offer story times on social media sites
- Continuing to help residents access e-books and streaming movies and music on their devices
- Continuing to help residents learn, research, and explore, using our digital subscriptions and apps (language learning, grant searches, business research, children's homework help, etc.)

Parks and Facilities

- Consulting with Bob Kirchherr, CSP, Principal and Indoor Air Quality and Industrial Hygienist for O’Reilly, Talbot & Okun Engineering Associate to review the city’s air systems at all municipal buildings – police and fire HQ, City Hall, Schools, etc.
- Continuing the deep cleaning of all city buildings and facilities
- Continuing to monitor city parks on social distancing aspects
- Installing signs at city parks reminding residents to wear face coverings when social distancing is not possible
- Reviewing and implementing plans and procedures for cleaning measures and maintenance of city parks for reopening phase
- Reviewing potential alternate site locations for homeless triage facility and population surge facility for short-term and long-term aspects pending the duration of pandemic if needed
- Continuing to review the city’s phased reopening plan based on the Governors guidance and recommendations
 - Reviewing all protocols and procedures for short and long term reopening aspects
 - Reviewing and preparing for the reopening of city facilities for the summer, if public health and safety permits
 - Phase I
 - Parks continue to be open for passive recreation
 - Golf courses are open with restrictions
 - Tennis courts open with restrictions
 - Park toll booths will reopen
 - Farmers markets with restrictions
 - Forest Park Zoo – pending the hiring and stationing of bath attendants

- Park picnics will be allowed with restrictions
 - Riverfront boating and kayak rents with restrictions
- Continues to review the health measures and facility needs for municipal buildings during city's phased reopening - will adhere to state guidance and recommendations
 - Temperature check before entering
 - Hand sanitizer at each entrance and exit
 - Limiting entrances and exits to a minimum within building and fire code
 - Install protective health measures at locations where the public gathers and interacts with city staff
 - Reviewing air flow and ventilation systems in public buildings
 - Installing pedestrian traffic flow signs and 6 feet distancing floor decals in municipal buildings
- Reviewing with cabinet and department heads and with HR for reopening aspects
 - Installing health and safety measures at all municipal buildings
 - Providing city employees with proper PPE's to preserve workforce
 - Coordinating with each city department to identify the needs for Phased reopening
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce

Public Safety

Fire

- Reviewing plans to begin smoke detector inspections
- Announced Food Drive to help residents in need. Non-perishable food items can be donated and dropped off at city fire stations. Residents are encouraged to call ahead or ring the doorbell and to leave items at the door for social distancing aspects.
- Continues with proactive sanitizing and disinfecting measures
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Responded to several local fires
 - SFD reminds residents to be mindful and careful with smoking materials and other flammable items

Police

- Personnel Status
 - 4 out due to coronavirus
 - 12 out due to injury
 - 16 have retired as of January 1, 2020
 - 8 pending retirements
- Continues to provide anti-crime activity
 - Notable arrest
 - Two suspects arrested and two guns seized – one is a violent repeat offender who was serving a suspended sentence on a previous firearms arrest and for assault and battery on a police officer (dragging an officer with a car)
 - Heightened patrols with Sheriff's Department in city parks
 - Increase traffic enforcement – including special details with State Police to deter dirt bikes and drag racing activities
 - Increase attention on breaking and entering crimes – residential and commercial properties
 - Increase in domestic and restraining orders
 - Increase in mental health related calls for service – more Behavioral Health Network (BHN) staff added

- Continues with positive community outreach activities where possible.
- Working with the Health Department on local enforcement aspects of Governor's face covering order which took effect on Wednesday, May 6, 2020
- Continues to review and implement the city's phased reopening plans for the Police Department facilities for access for the public for LTC applications and renewals, traffic accident reports and other license/permit needs by appointment
- Commissioner Clapprod announced that training has begun for officers with the body worn camera program on May 20, 2020 and have the first phase of cameras active and in use on May 26, 2020
- The National Guard and State Police continue to work alongside SPD
- Continues with proactive sanitizing and disinfecting measures
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Continues to assist at Central High School Oasis Foodbank aspects

Schools

- To date, Sodexo has served 880,516 meals to Springfield Public Schools students since the program began on March 12th (meals included breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks)
 - 17 school sites
 - Additional site at Smead Arena / Central High School added to complement the Oasis Food Bank on Fridays
- Continues to distribute laptops to students for remote learning – over 10,000 are currently being given out, including to our homeless students, on top of the 7,000 our students had already been using prior to pandemic
- Following new Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines for remote learning
- Continue to implement remote learning aspects for the remainder of the academic year and will review potential summer learning program options
 - School Committee adopted the recommendation of Superintendent Dan Warwick, as schools have been closed since mid-March and are now out for the rest of the academic year per Governor Baker's order last week, for a Credit / No Credit grading system for the 4th Quarter
 - New grading policy set to go out to students and families
 - Working on remote summer and enrichment learning programs
- June 19, 2020 will be last day of school
- Congratulations to Class of 2020 lawn signs being placed throughout the city in support of our high school seniors during these challenging and difficult times
- Planning virtual graduations for Class of 2020 and modified traditional in-person graduations as organized at the individual schools while following all social distancing aspects
- Reviewing, along with state officials and other School Superintendents, a phased reopening plan for next academic year.

Law/HR/Labor

- Continues to assist and advise all departments on pertinent city business
- Continues to review and monitor all federal and state legislation
- Reviewing potential guidelines, protocols and procedures for city employees to return to work in phases as the city begins to reopen under controlled safety and health measures
 - To protect and preserve our workforce – health and safety measures and protocols, and work place safety standards are being drafted for reopening phase for city employees and the public at all municipal facilities

- Continues to reviewing Governor Baker's Four-Phased reopening plan
- Reviewing with cabinet and department heads for reopening aspects
 - Installing health and safety measures at all municipal buildings
 - Providing city employees with proper PPE's to preserve workforce
 - Coordinating with each city department to identify the needs for Phased reopening
 - Provided training material for city employees to adjust to modified workplace standards as part of the city's phased reopening plan based on CDC and health guidelines
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce

Misc.

Food Bank

- Continue Oasis Food Pantry operations on Friday's 10-2pm through John Foley, Sodexo, School Department, Mayor's Office, DPW, SPD and Food Bank of Western Mass – serving over 3,500 families with food and milk distribution at Central High School and Smead Arena parking lot